

## PHENOMENON OF FAILED STATE AND REFUGEE/IMMIGRATION PROBLEM: ANALYSIS ON SYRIA EXAMPLE<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

There have been several essays written on failed state in the recent years. One of the significant reasons of that much intense interest on the issue is the anxiety that failed states constitute a threat for strong and stable states. Successful/failed state typologies are improved in studies; the characteristics of it are determined; failed states are classified and defined among themselves; and preventive strategies are developed on reconstruction of state. However, studies have not put emphasize on failed and especially the stated collapsed in this process and rush of immigrants up to date. The objective of this study is to contribute to the scientific studies by discussing the example of Syria.

Turkey is directly affected by rush of immigrants and/or migration caused by failed states and collapses of states during this while. According to official figures, the number of the immigrants coming from Syria, being in the state of collapse, is approximately about 3 million. Together with other immigrants coming from Middle East states experiencing collapse, the number of the refugees coming to Turkey has reached five million.

Probable connections between the collapse of state institutions, the factors leading to this and rush of immigrants caused by it will be discussed in this study in theoretical sense. Failed states are the ones that lost their domination of land on their pieces of lands partially or wholly. Due to the authority gap occurred, terrorist

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organizations use those lands as a base as they can move easily in these territories. Terrorist organizations apply severe violence towards public and try to terrorize them by implementing criminal incidents (kidnapping, rape, blackmailing etc.) and compel them to give all kinds of support and even to migrate. As a natural conclusion of this process, people leave their countries to find safer places for themselves. In this respect, the factors weakening or causing to collapse of the level of stateness and tactics and strategies that terrorist organizations apply to force civil society to migrate are tried to be discussed herein.

**Key Words:** failed states, collapsed states, rush of immigrants, terrorism, Turkey

## Introduction

The concept of failed state came to the fore after the collapse of Soviet Union and became popular in the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century. Particularly, September 11 was a milestone both in the viewpoint of alteration of scientific approach to the concept of failed state and political view. Namely, having been seen and discussed as limited with African countries until that time, the concept of failed state was taken to international political platform after September 11. Therefore, the way of dealing the issue as a problem changed. In this sense, September 11 provided the concept of failed state's being perceived as a factor not only threatening the interests of west but also the safety of west (Lambach, 2015:2). Namely, USA and EU classified the states collapsed as a result of the process of failed stateness as threat rather than the states collapsed as a result of invasion of a foreign state. Therefore, the concept of failed state became the focus of interest of security policy of global dominant states. Accordingly, the relationship between failed states and terrorism came to the prominence in scientific and political terms. On the other hand, the relationship between failed states and narrowing and even destruction of the living spaces of people and people's being forced to leave their spaces and to migrate was never pointed out. The primary objective of this study is to seek answer for this question: "what are the elements forcing people to migrate in failed states in which level of violence of terrorist organizations or internal conflicts are at the highest level". The concept of failed state will only be tried to be explained on meaning basis without giving answer to this question.

## The concept of failed state

The concept was firstly expressed by Gerald B. Helman and Steven R. Ratner, who were bureaucrats retired from USA Ministry of Foreign Relations in 1992. Helman and Ratner stated a new disturbing fact, which is the concept of failed nation state, came out after the end of Cold War period and defined this concept as a state, *insufficient at the point of being a member of international society* (1992:3).

There is not a generally accepted definition of the concept of failed state in the literature. In general, failed stateness is a situation, in which a state loses its administrative capacity and cannot fulfill its fundamental functions (Schneckener, 2004; Rotberg, 2004). Rotberg specified that states became failed when it is destroyed or demolished due to internal conflicts and when it cannot render public services; notably safety of life and property of its people (2004:1). Rotberg tried to determine concrete criteria with the purpose of differentiating typologies of failing, collapsed and failed states. According to this, strong states are the states providing safety of life and property successfully, rendering fundamental public services such as health, education and justice and providing contribution of its people to the process of political decision making. Despite this, failed states are the states that cannot provide these services adequately and overwhelmed with internal conflicts (2004:5). The approach of Schneckener to the subject matter shows resemblance with the approach of Rotberg to a large extent. According to him, a strong state can be mentioned only when it fulfills its security function (providing the monopoly of legal violence, providing the superiority of law and justice, providing public order, fight against offense and criminals, fight against terrorism etc.), welfare function (education, health, economy, communication and transportation, employment, infrastructure investments etc.), legitimacy and state of law function (providing political attendance of citizens by encouraging the formation of elections or political parties etc.). For a state's performing all these functions, it is required that it has built a security, public administration, economy (finance, revenue) system with high administrative capacity and independent rule of law. The primary of these functions is security without any doubt. The reason for that is it is not possible to fulfill and sustain the functions in the other two core areas adequately when stability in security cannot be provided (Schneckener, 2004 and 2006). In this respect, partial existence or nonexistence of monopoly of violence is main indicator and characteristic of failed state (Öğüt, 2013). This approach to the conceptualization of failed state is common. However, it is especially stated above that it is not sufficient all alone.

Within the direction of these explanations, the concept of failed state is used to

refer the institutions of a state that lost its capacity to fulfill its functions (army, security, jurisdiction, education, health, infrastructure, transportation, revenue etc.) to a great extent and consequently, face the risk of losing its legitimacy (Helman/Ratner, 1992; Migdal, 1988; Rotberg, 2004; Schneckener, 2004). As per this, the level of failed stateness is a process. It is not necessary that this process results in a collapse. It is probable that the states can survive in the end of this process. That is to say, some states can manage this process successfully and turn the state into an operating system, but some cannot manage this process well enough and lose their legitimacy before their people; despite this, those can maintain their feature as state, being in the international arena. For instance, Somali, Tanzania, Republic of the Congo, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria etc. have lost their characteristics of stateness substantially, but these states take their places in the list of states (see Gökce and Gökce, 2017).

It is revealed out from the explanations that the most important reference point is comprised of the phenomenon of legitimacy in terms of states' sustaining their existence. Maintaining legitimacy depends of performance of fundamental functions in political, legal, economic and social fields, which are the reason for being of states, by providing safety of life and property of citizens, establishing the superiority of law, constituting health, education and infrastructure etc. services at satisfactory levels, actualization of transparency and accountability principles. As just specified, failed states are the states that cannot show an influential performance of its basic functions in political, legal, economic and social fields, partially or wholly; and struggling with structural problems became a vicious circle. Additionally, the states the legitimacy of which are questioned by its people as a result of ethnic, lingual and/or faith-based split's reaching to advanced level with a deep and demolishing clash environment are also classified as failed state (Karaçuka and Çelik, 2017:27; Eker, 2015). In this perspective, failed states are the states that partially or wholly lose its dominance on its piece of land. Social life became quite difficult and even became impossible in these states due to advanced level of violence in these states, namely intensive civil wars, terrorist organizations' facilitating these as base because of the fact that they can move easily in these states, not taking drugs and arms smuggling in hand. As a natural conclusion of this process, people leave their countries to find safer places.

### **The Factors Leading to the Fact of Failed State**

The factors result in failure and even collapse of a state are summarized under

the following titles in the literatures concerning the related issue. These are (see Rotberg, 2004; Schneckener, 2004; Gökce, 2007 and 2016; Lambach/Bethke, 2012; Lambach, 2009 ):

1. *Political factors*: in this group, neopatrimonial structure, protectionism, and in short ill-management can lead to the collapse of a state by emptying the state. Furthermore, its regime to sustain its potency can weaken the state capacity (Englehart, 2009). Another trivet of this thesis is comprised of the concept of “shade state” or “parallel state”(Zartman, 1995). Identity politics and intergroup potency struggle can also increase the risk of clash in the society and result in the collapse of a failed state.
2. *Economic factors*: Failed states cannot support production as its management mechanism is weakened and became inoperative, and it faces problems in terms of pecuniary resource as production is low and it has difficulty in collecting taxes. Political elites prefer sharing the resources of the state among themselves rather than increasing the production by means of incentives and increasing tax collection capacity of the state by increasing administrative capacity of the state. This accelerates the bankruptcy and collapse of the state (Schneckener, 2006). Particularly, the states that are weak in terms of administrative capacity are affected by the fluctuations in world market prices (Debiel et al., 2005).
3. *Social, structural and cultural factors*: if there are different ethnic and religious groups, and if these are not integrated to the society, they struggle for power among themselves and thus weaken the state. Especially, if the management is under the responsibility of a minor ethnic group, the risk of intergroup clash is quite high. This is because; other groups tend to rebel and resist against the minor group. This case triggers the civil war. (Schneckener, 2006). If the rate of youth is high in the total population and employment opportunities are not offered can also increase the risk of social conflict and can result in the weakening of the state.
4. *International and regional factors*: International pressures and threats can lead the state to a failure if the administrative capacity of the state is weak. Decrease in the international pressure on weak state can decrease the desire for reforms of the management. Globalization can also make the management of the state difficult. In the same manner, civil war in neighboring countries, extreme rush of refugees as a result of collapse of states, and increasing violent and terrorist actions can complicate the state’s overcoming the problems and if a state is weak, those result in its

failure and even collapse. Nevertheless, being integrated with international system decreases the risk of collapse of states (Bates et al., 2003). However, it is a fact that structural adjustment programs required by IMF and World Bank to be applied by failed or weak states in 1980s brought these states at the edge of collapse (Bussmann/Schneider 2007).

As these factors explicitly reveal, one of the foremost factors that lead to failure and collapse of a state is weakening of administrative capacity of state, notably the monopoly of using force and management mechanism's becoming inoperative.

### **Relationship between Failed States and Terrorism**

General opinion in the literature regarding failed states is that these states form a basis for spread of terrorist incidents and inciting the violence (Karaçuka/Çelik, 2017:28). Hence, the fact that five countries having experienced highest level of terrorism since 2013 is at the high warning level in terms of failed state index supports this opinion. However, the fact that 60 of 97 countries with failure factor, that is to say having failed state index at the level of alert do not experience terrorist incidents or these countries' having low violence of terrorism shows that it is difficult to generalize the phenomenon of failure is sufficient for reveal of terrorist structures absolutely and on its own (Karaçuka/Çelik, 2017:31).

Therefore, it can be said that failed states are elements creating the effect of catalyst in increase and spread of terrorist activities rather than causing showing up terrorist structures on its own. Scientific studies also support this assumption (see Karaçuka/Çelik, 2017: 38).

Authority gap arising from the loss of region domination of failed states provides grand advantages for structure of terrorist organizations and acting easily. This case both makes fight against terrorist organizations difficult and complicates preventing illegal elements such as drug and arms smuggling.

### **Failed States and Refugee Phenomenon**

As a result of abolish of monopoly of using force in failed states and management mechanisms' becoming inoperative, chaos and internal conflict become ordinary. Acts of violence, arms smuggling, human and drug trafficking, robbery, seizure, racketeering, illegal trade in goods and plundering workplaces and houses and etc. increase in insecure environment and this results in economic rout within the country. The gangs and terrorist organizations replacing the state authority

receive properties, goods and money from civil society and force them leave their houses, properties and goods by using violence. In the cases when civil people are displaced, plunder starts. For example, terrorist organizations such as PYD in addition to ISIS in Syria civil war racketeer from civil people in the regions they control. In this manner, terrorist organizations both meet their fundamental needs and create resources for logistic and equipment needs with this money they collect in the name of tax (see Eker, 2015).

Terrorist organizations slaughter and rape wildly to compel people mass migration, acquire fame and make propaganda with the purpose of seizing property and goods of people by creating fear and terror atmosphere on civil people (Eker, 2015).

As indicated by Kalyvas, extreme violence itself turned to civil targets became a tactic and “discipline” (Kalyvas, 2011:114). Civilian casualties were experienced in every term having witnessed war. Distinguishing feature of this indispensable reality in new wars is its taking place intentionally. While disappear of the difference between soldier-civil in new wars leads to civil people’s suffer (Kalyvas, 2011:167), this unjust suffering originates from their being exploited directly not from their being close warriors not in uniform sneaked to settlement areas during the conflicts or not from their being sensitive, defenseless and unarmed (Mello, 2010:2).

Instrumentalization of violence is not limited with physical actions directly impelled to human beings. Indirect and psychological means are most frequently utilized. For example, people are taken into a position that they cannot meet their fundamental needs in the region they live and therefore they are forced to immigration. Especially, the regions under siege are encountered with drought, scarcity and epidemics and thus can be demolished. Preventing food, medicine and aid deliveries and cuts in resources such as electricity, water and petroleum subject people to violence indirectly. The marks of violence such as destroy of structures such as roads, bridges, barrages, hospitals, plants and schools preserves for a long time (Münkler, 2010:139).

As another tool of violence method, young woman are exposed to sexual abuse and rape systematically by warriors. Therefore, defat is adopted by the party deemed as enemy by means of breaking down moral values and split of social fabric and reproduction of society by itself is prevented in socio-cultural terms and construction of future generations is hypothecated. Systematic actualization of rapes at certain times and places or concentration camps is a product of intentional strategy (Kaldor, 2013:55). These actions causing deeper social and



psychological damages than physical violence are turned into ordinary activities in failing states.

Acts of violence seen in Syria civil war shows how violence instrumentalize this directly. At least 220.000 people, most of whom are civil people, passed away throughout the country since the beginning of the crisis and half of the country, having 18 million populations became refugee within the country or in neighbor countries. UN and other international institutions reported that all groups fighting on the field committed war crime of, used heavy torture methods, compelled civil people to migrate, intervened in mass rape incidents and utilized the civil people seized during war as human shield. Arbitrary arrests, tortures and violence methods applied in underground imprisonments conducted by soldiers of regime were also included in the report (UN-Report, 2014).

In brief, violence is a strategy wildly, outrageously and commonly used by terrorist organizations as a means in failing and failed states (see Gökce, 2016). This strategy tries to paralyze the society physically and psychologically. In this sense, the war in Syria comes to the fore as concrete example of numerous acts of violence going on new massacres, torture and rape incidents day by day (Eker, 2015). The images of civilian people slaughtered, cut in some organs or subjected to torture during civil war lead people to escape and leave their country in masses.

## **Conclusion**

The increase in the number of failed states in which terrorism has the opportunity of spreading easily and unreasoning rise of terrorism in the world, primarily in these states pose threat for operability of countries both in the region and international system and for establishment of permanent peace. For that reason, strong states' supporting these organizations in all perspectives to use them within the direction of their own objectives rather than fighting against terrorism, turning into a vicious circle by reaching to such huge dimensions within the system of states constitute a threat not only for the countries in the status of failed state but also developed countries. From this point of view, strong states or great powers and some other international institutions shall abstain from cooperation with terrorist organizations in failed states. Otherwise, it will be impossible to cope with the problem of refugee. This is because; there is a close connection between failed and particularly collapsed states and rush of refugees as this study reveals. Furthermore, it is obvious that there is a close bond between failed state and terrorism. When considered from this aspect, the fact that most of the states where chaos and violence is dominant and therefore loss of property and life is experienced much are in the status of failed state supports this vision.



Researches are as the indicator of the fact that failure of state forms a convenient basis both for increase and spread of terrorism and as a natural consequence, it triggers the rush of refugees. For that reason, particularly the great powers and strong states policy makers need to fight against the phenomenon of state failure turning countries into pieces of land where terrorist organizations can act easily and where drug and arms smuggling cannot be taken under control in every term seriously; and it seems indispensable that they need to put proactive security precautions in place within the scope of regional treaties to be established within this direction. To put a finer point on it, there is a rapid increase in the number of failed and collapsing states particularly in Middle East as well as Africa and Southeast Asia recently. It is obvious that strong states contribute to this. The general view in failed and failing states is that army and state mechanisms become inoperative, terrorist and crime organizations and gangs benefitting from the authority gap are turned into local units substituting state and creating chaos and violent ambient and therefore compel civil society to migrate .

Global powers' functioning as an accelerator for the collapse of states rather than fighting against the fact of failed state makes it difficult to find a solution for the problem of refugee. Particularly, preventing mass deaths and immigrations in collapsed states is only possible with global powers' changing their foreign policies and cooperating with Turkey. In other words, it is necessary to cease collapse of state in Middle East to prevent mass rush of immigrants. Otherwise, it will not be possible to prevent leap of anarchy and civil war from collapsed states to neighbor countries.

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